

date most females were building. It is certainly possible that all the unmated males eventually obtained mates. However, they were bypassed by the first females. Since most nests in the area were low (three to 10 feet), the female's preference for a territory with shrubbery is probably related to this. Verner (1963. *Proc. Internatl. Ornith. Congr.* I:299-307), has shown that the nature of the habitat is also important in the female's selection of a mate in the Long-billed Marsh Wren (*Telmatodytes palustris*).

This poses the question whether the female chooses the habitat or the male. The answer is probably that both are important. An unmated female is attracted to a singing male, then features of the territory as well as male responses determine whether she will remain. Thus, there is a "double check" which functions to assure reproductive success. Males make the initial choice of a territory, and certain environmental features are important in their choice. Then the female bases her selection of mate at least partially on features affecting the availability of suitable nest sites. Females that arrive earlier obtain a greater choice of potential mates and territories. Selection for early arrival of females, however, is probably counterbalanced by other selective pressures such as cold weather, which in some years may result in food shortage.

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Preferences for food by birds at a winter feeding station.—Although preferences by certain species for certain foods are recognized, few data exist. The present observations made 10 miles northeast of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, record what preferences birds had for certain foods and, in addition, weather conditions and flock size. The feeding station was a backyard having a north-facing slope with grass, wild flowers, and bushes. The northern edge is lined with small to medium-sized elm and maple trees.

Six feeding stations, constructed of plywood, were partitioned into four sections. The left side was larger to prevent the food from scattering. All openings faced toward the observation window. Four different common bird foods were used: (1) medium-sized cracked corn, (2) pieces of white bread, (3) sunflower seeds, (4) commercial bird-feed mix, consisting mainly of seeds from which sunflower seeds and corn kernels were removed. Two handfuls of each food were placed into a section every three days. About every third or fourth refilling, all foods were cleaned out and each food was moved one section to the right, to eliminate habitual return to the same section.

Observations of 15 minutes each at random times during the day, totalling 20 hours,

TABLE I
RECORDS OF SIX SPECIES' FOOD PREFERENCES GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES

Species	House Sparrow ¹	Starling ²	Slate-colored Junco ³	Black-capped Chickadee ⁴	Tree Sparrow ⁵	Evening Grosbeak ⁶
Total birds recorded	765	365	167	183	45	20
Cracked corn	29.3	26.0	18.6	2.7	17.8	0.0
Pieces of bread	4.3	64.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sunflower seeds	1.3	4.4	0.6	85.9	0.0	100.0
Wild seeds	65.1	4.9	80.8	11.4	82.2	0.0

¹ *Passer domesticus*.

² *Sturnus vulgaris*.

³ *Junco hyemalis*.

⁴ *Parus atricapillus*.

⁵ *Spizella arborea*.

⁶ *Hesperiphona vespertina*.

TABLE 2
FEEDING HABITS IN RELATION TO WEATHER CONDITIONS FOR 75 PERIODS AND 1,296 BIRDS

Sky	Per cent of periods	Per cent of birds
Sunny-clear	44.0	44.7
Medium-cloudy	10.7	14.7
Overcast	32.0	32.3
Rain or snow	13.3	8.3
Temperature (F)		
11-20	9.4	7.4
21-30	12.0	10.7
31-40	46.6	55.0
41-50	21.4	18.8
51-60	10.6	8.1
Wind (mph)		
0-5	58.8	71.0
6-10	20.0	14.5
11-15	12.0	7.5
16-20	6.6	5.5
21-25	2.6	1.5

were made generally every other day from late September 1963 to early April 1964. On some days two observations were taken. The weather conditions were obtained by an outdoor thermometer, Beaufort wind scale, and the local weather reports.

The totals in the tables include all the birds that took food. For example, 765 records of House Sparrows could have included only 300 different birds. Data were obtained for 15 species, but were sufficient for discussion for only six. Records of choice of food are summarized in Table 1.

The relation of feeding habits to weather (Table 2) indicates that in most conditions approximately the same percentages of birds were observed for each condition as that condition was of the total. Possibly a few less birds fed in the rain or snow than expected. The wind, however, played an important part. A comparison of observed percentage (71.0) against expected (58.8) for 0-5 miles per hour was significant by a chi-square test when contrasted with all the other wind velocities together.

Analysis of the number of birds at the feeder showed that most birds ate singly. On 912 occasions different species came together at the feeders. One individual soon drove off the intruder and ate alone 645 times. Only two species occurred in larger flocks, the House Sparrow and the Evening Grosbeak. The House Sparrow fed alone 144 times, with another 86 times, with two others 47 times, and only four times ate in a group of six.

The change in position of the various foods confused the birds for a short time. A Starling, accustomed to bread in the first section, would either fly away or move back and forth until it located the bread.—BURNELL A. CRIST, *The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, 19 March 1965.*

Fire in birds' nests.—During the 1965 nesting season I noticed two independent and widely separated newspaper accounts of fires occurring in birds' nests built in attics. I attempted to verify the circumstances of each. Although no ornithologist saw the nests